

BYZANTINE LEAD SEALS FROM APHRODISIAS

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This brief essay and the catalogue of Byzantine lead seals that accompanies it represent, as currently planned, one of a series of (separate) final reports on excavations at Aphrodisias. Several, like the present report, focus on "Byzantine Aphrodisias" (Stavropolis/Caria), including Robin Cormack's survey of the buildings, Michael Hendy's study of the Byzantine coins, and Charlotte Roueché's publication of the Byzantine inscriptions. Particular attention is directed to the last-mentioned, since this report on seals and Mrs. Roueché's inscription catalogue form companion studies and both should be consulted concerning prosopographical notices from the site. The seal finds at Aphrodisias total twenty-five specimens (including one blank) and, accordingly, comprise the largest group of Byzantine bullae which have been recovered from an excavated site in Asia Minor.¹ The only comparable finds are fourteen seals from Pergamon which Regling published in 1913.² Among the seal finds at Aphrodisias, two bullae in particular—both seals of metropolitans of Stavropolis/Caria—merit discussion in essay form; the remainder are commented upon in the catalogue.

Aphrodisias, a metropolis of southeastern Asia Minor, was the diocesan center of the ecclesiastical province of Caria.³ The see's classical appellation persisted until the seventh century, when it was renamed Stavropolis, its denomination, for example, in the conciliar acts of 680.⁴ Recently Zacos and Veglery have published a seal which bears on the obverse a depiction of the archangel Michael

standing, winged, with a labarum in the right hand, and flanked by two monograms resolving into the invocation "Commander of Hosts, help."⁵ The inscription is completed on the reverse, where the name "Eustathios" appears in the form of a monogram, accompanied by the circular inscription "Metropolitan of Stavropolis." Neither the specimen's decoration nor its letter forms provide sufficient evidence for a precise date and the authors, quite properly, have labeled the specimen: "Eighth Century (?)." There can be little doubt, however, on the basis of general stylistic and epigraphic features, that this seal was issued either before 730 or in the period 787–815. The date of this specimen's issue is also complicated by the fact that the see underwent a further change in name, but it is not clear when this change occurred. The emergence of an alternative name is traceable in conciliar acts, beginning with the subscription list of the second council of Nicaea (787). At this council the see was represented by a deacon Theophylact; in subscribing to the acts, Theophylact employs a formula in which Stavropolis is coupled with the designation Caria. The subscription reads: "Theophylact, deacon and exarch, and representative of the throne of Stavropolis, that is Caria."⁶ In subsequent councils, as Janin has noted, only the latter designation is used, although the former is preserved in episcopal lists.⁷ From notices in conciliar acts it appears that at the end of the eighth century the name of

¹The seals were recovered in campaigns conducted between 1962 and 1972.

²K. Regling, *Altertümer von Pergamon*, I/2 (Berlin, 1913), 333–36.

³The see is discussed by R. Janin, *Dictionnaire d'histoire et de géographie ecclésiastiques*, in *DHGE*, XI (1949), cols. 1035–38, and by V. Laurent, *Le corpus des sceaux de l'empire byzantin* (hereafter cited as *Corpus*), V/1 (Paris, 1963), 377–78.

⁴The see was represented by "Theodore, by grace of God, bishop of Stavropolis"; see M. Le Quien, *Oriens christianus*, I (Paris, 1740), col. 900. Bishop Sisinnios employed the same designation at the Council in Trullo (691–92); *ibid.* The name Stavropolis is first attested in the *ecthesis* of the Pseudo-Epiphanius (seventh century); see *Corpus*, 378.

⁵G. Zacos and A. Veglery, *Byzantine Lead Seals* (Basel, 1972), no. 1351.

⁶Le Quien, *op. cit.*, col. 901.

⁷*DHGE*, col. 1036. As regards the designation Stavropolis, it should be observed that Zacos and Veglery, *Byzantine Lead Seals*, no. 1732, have published a bull of the ninth century, bearing the inscription "Arsavir, *dioicetes* of Stavropolis." The designation on this specimen may be contrasted with a ninth-century seal of Metropolitan Sergios (*Corpus*, no. 514; cf. nos. 515–19), whereon appears the name Caria. Only the metropolitanate, it seems, adopted the denomination Caria; the bureaucracy continued to employ the appellation Stavropolis. Interestingly, the name Stavropolis is used as a denomination of the see (in conjunction with the name Caria, however) on a dedicatory cross of the year 1172. See W. Buckler, "A Memento of Stavropolis," *BZ*, 28 (1928), 99. In the fourteenth century, Stavropolis superseded Caria as the designation of the see in patriarchal and synodal councils.

the see was fluctuating and only in the ninth century did Caria become the metropolitanate's common designation. But this notion is contradicted by a seal in the Zacos/Veglery catalogue.⁸ The specimen, stamped with the inscription "Mother of God, help Michael, metropolitan of Caria," is dated by the authors to the eighth century. Unfortunately, the specimen is weakly impressed and so its letter forms are not as distinct as one might wish for guaranteeing the period of its issue. Two well-preserved examples of this seal, however, have been recovered at Aphrodisias (see no. 1 in the present catalogue) and their epigraphic traits confirm the Zacos/Veglery date. Hence we may conclude that already in the eighth century Caria had replaced Stavropolis as the see's denomination. The formula of identification which deacon Theophylact employed at the second council of Nicaea in 787 does not signal that a process of name change had begun, but that, indeed, the name had changed. From all appearances, the iconographic seal of "Eustathios, metropolitan of Stavropolis" was issued before the advent of Iconoclasm and represents the earliest extant seal of the "throne" of Stavropolis/Caria.

The majority of the seal finds at Aphrodisias date from the tenth and eleventh centuries. Official seals are almost evenly divided between ecclesiastical and civil. Many of the former were issued by the metropolitans of the see, while the greater part of the latter derive from officials of the treasury. Among ecclesiastical seals is found an unknown seal of a Metropolitan John (our catalogue no. 6). It bears on each side an inscription of three lines; the whole reads: "Seal of the writings of John of Caria." Conceivably this seal may have belonged to the John of Caria who is mentioned in a synodal act of 1030,⁹ but in 1032 this John was succeeded by Constantine. On the other hand, the epigraphic characteristics of the present seal suggest a date in the middle or later decades of the eleventh century. The possibility arises, then, that in the course of the eleventh century at least two metropolitans by the name of John were in charge of the see of Caria. Few seals from the site date after the battle of Manzikert and the entrance of the Turks into Asia Minor. Indeed, the sigillographical record of Caria ends

well before Theodore Mankaphas' attack on the city in 1188.

CATALOGUE

1.

Michael, Metropolitan of Caria. Eighth Century
Two examples: acc. nos. 63.293 and 66.155 (illus.)
Diam.: 33 mm. and 28 mm.

Obverse: legend of five lines:

+ ΘΕ
ΟΤΟΚΕ
ΒΟΗΘΕΙ
ΜΙΧΑ
ΗΛ +

+ Θεοτόκε βοήθει Μιχαήλ +.

Reverse: legend of four lines:

+ ΜΙΤ
ΡΟΠΟΛΙ
ΤΗΚΑΡ
ΙΑC +

+ μητροπολίτη Καρίας +.

A parallel specimen is published by Zacos and Veglery, *Byzantine Lead Seals*, no. 939a. The importance of the series is discussed in the introduction to the present catalogue.

2.

Joseph, Metropolitan of Caria Tenth Century
No accession number; not reproduced
Diam.: 21 mm.; field: 15 mm.

Obverse: portrait *en buste* of St. Michael, winged, holding a scepter in the left hand. At left: Μ-Ι; at right: Χ-Α: Μιχα(ήλ).

Reverse: cruciform monogram, composed of the letters *phi* (in center), *omega*, *sigma*, *eta*, and *iota*. Certain solution: Ἰωσήφ. In the four angles of the monogram, the legend: ΜΡΟ-ΠΩ-ΚΑ-ΠΙ : μ(ητ)ροπολ(ίτης) Καρι(ας).

Laurent, *Corpus*, no. 515, publishes a parallel specimen. Apart from seals, this Joseph of Caria is unknown. Of interest is the iconography of the series. Like several of the occupants of the "throne" of Caria, Joseph pays honor to St. Michael. The archangel's portrait is found, for example, on an eighth-

⁸Zacos and Veglery, *Byzantine Lead Seals*, no. 939a.

⁹*Corpus*, 380. It is to this John (*loc. cit.*, no. 518) that Laurent has assigned a seal bearing on the obverse a portrait *en buste* of St. Michael and on the reverse the inscription, "Lord, help your servant John, metropolitan of Caria."



Cat. No. 1, Obverse



Reverse



Cat. No. 3, Obverse



Reverse



Cat. No. 4, Obverse



Reverse



Cat. No. 5, Obverse



Reverse



Cat. No. 6, Obverse



Reverse



Cat. No. 7, Obverse



Reverse



Cat. No. 8, Obverse



Reverse



Cat. No. 9, Obverse



Reverse



Cat. No. 10, Obverse



Reverse



Cat. No. 11, Obverse



Reverse



Cat. No. 12, Obverse



Reverse



Cat. No. 13, Obverse



Reverse



Cat. No. 14, Obverse



Reverse

century seal of Metropolitan Eustathios (Zacos and Vegliery, *Byzantine Lead Seals*, no. 1351). Bust portraits of St. Michael appear on the eleventh-century seals of Metropolitan John (*Corpus*, no. 518) and Metropolitan Eustratios (*Corpus*, no. 519). Apparently, the cult of St. Michael enjoyed a long period of popularity at Caria and it is likely that a major sanctuary within the see was dedicated to him.

3.

Michael, Metropolitan of Caria Tenth Century
Acc. no. 63.77 (illus.)
Diam.: 24 mm.

Obverse: half-length depiction of St. Michael, winged, holding a scepter in the right hand. Around the archangel's head, the legend:

ΤΑΞΙΑΡ, ROHΘ, : Ταξιάρχ(χα) βοήθει.

Reverse: legend of five lines:

+ ΤΩCΩΔ,
ΜΙΧΑΗΛΕΛ
ΕΩΘΥΜΗΤΡ
ΟΠΟΛΙΤΗ
ΚΑΡΙΑC

. . . + Τῷ σῷ δ(ούλῳ) Μιχαήλ ἐλέω Θ(εο)ῦ
μητροπολίτη Καρίας . . .

A parallel specimen published by Laurent (*Corpus*, no. 516) is broken along the channel and only half of the seal is preserved. Without benefit of a second example, Laurent incorrectly judged the legend of the reverse to consist of six lines, beginning with the invocation "Lord help." A singular feature marks the present specimen: a silver wash has been applied to its surface. Since the seal is well engraved, someone may well have cherished the specimen and enhanced its surface with silver.

Isaiah, Bishop of Brioula Tenth Century
Acc. no. 66.319 (illus. [object reproduced is a plaster cast])
Diam.: 25 mm.

Obverse: cross, set on four steps; from the base arise tendrils into the field. Circular inscription: + ΧΡΙ·ΤΕΡ, ΤΩCΩΔΟΝΛ, : + Χρι[σ]τὲ β(οή)[θ(ε)] τῷ σῷ δούλ(ῳ).

Reverse: legend of four lines:

+
+ ΗCΑΙ
ΑΕΠΙCΚΟ
ΠΩΡΡ . .
VΛΙΑC

+ + Ἡσαΐα ἐπισκόπῳ Βρι[ο]υλίας.

This specimen, an example of a previously unknown series, is the earliest extant seal of a bishop of Brioula, a suffragan bishopric of Ephesos. Several forms of the name are attested: Βρίουλα, Βρίουλ(λ)α, Βρύελον (see *DHGE*, X, 1938, col. 773; and *Corpus*, p. 197); the present seal introduces a further variant in orthography.

5.

Eusebios, Bishop of (?) Tenth Century
Acc. no. 66.320; chipped (illus.)
Diam.: 19 mm.

Obverse: cross, with two transverse bars. Along the circumference, remains of invocative legend: ΔQVΛ, .

Reverse: legend of four lines:

ΕVC .
VΙΩΕΠ
ΚΟΠΩ .
. CAC .

Εὐσ[ε]βίῳ ἐπ<ισ>κόπῳ . . . CAC . .

The two final lines of the legend may read: [ʽA] <ρ> [η]σας[ο] <ῡ>, a suffragan bishopric of Perge. See H. Gelzer, *Ungedruckte und ungenügend veröffentlichte Texte der Notitiae episcopatum* (Munich, 1901), 541.

6.

John (Metropolitan) of Caria Eleventh Century
Two examples: acc. nos. 66.315 and 67.367 (illus.)
Diam.: 23 mm. and 20 mm.

Obverse: legend of three lines:

— + —
CΦΡΑΓΙ,
ΤΩΝΓΡΑ
ΦΩΝ
— ✕ —

— + — Σφραγι(ς) τῶν γραφῶν — ✕ — .

Reverse: legend of three lines:

– + –
ΙΩΑΝ
ΝΟΒΚΑ
ΡΙΑC
– ✕ –

– + – Ἰωάννου Καρίας – ✕ –.

This seal may have belonged to the John of Caria who is mentioned in a synodal act of 1030 (cf. *Corpus*, no. 518). But this John was soon succeeded by Constantine (1032) and the letter forms of the seal suggest a date in the middle or later decades of the eleventh century.

7.

Nicetas, Chartophylax Eleventh Century,
Second Half

Acc. no. 68.410 (illus.)

Diam.: 30 mm.

Obverse: half-length depiction of the Virgin, holding the infant Christ on Her left arm. Visible at left: \overline{MP} .

Reverse: legend of five lines:

+ ΝΙΚΗ
ΤΑΝΑΓΝΗ
ΧΑΡΤΟΦΥ
ΛΑΚΑΚΕ
ΠΟΙC

+ Νικήταν ἀγνή χαρτοφύλακα σκέποις.

Laurent, publishing a parallel specimen (*Corpus*, no. 93), has attributed this seal to a Nicetas who was archdeacon and chartophylax of the Great Church in 1076–77.

8.

Theodore, Imperial Spatharios Ninth Century,
and Curator First Half

Acc. no. 65.187 (illus.)

Diam.: 23 mm.

Obverse: Marial invocative monogram: Θεοτόκε βοήθει.

In the four angles: ΤΩ – CΩ – Δϛ – ΛΩ.

Reverse: legend of four lines:

+ ΘΕΟ
Δ·ΡΩΡ
... Θ·SK
ϛPAT

+ Θεοδ[ώ]ρω β(ασιλικῷ) [σπα]θ(αρίῳ) (καὶ) κουράτ(ορι).

9.

John, Hypatos and Chartularios Ninth Century
of the Genikon Logothesion

Acc. no. 68.382 (illus.)

Diam.: 28 mm.

Obverse: cruciform invocative monogram, centered toward the left; only two letters, *rho* and *epsilon*, visible. In the four angles: . – Ω – ϞΟ – Ν : [K] <ύ>ριε [σ]ῶσον.

Reverse: legend of four lines:

+ ΙΩΑ .
. ΗΥΠ·SΧΑΡ
. ϞΓΕΝΙΚ .
ΛΟΓΟΘ

+ Ἰωά[ν][ν]η ὑπ(άτω) (καὶ) χαρ(τουλαρίῳ) [τ]οῦ γενικ[οῦ] λογοθ(εοῦ).

The invocative phrase “Lord save” is found on another specimen of the ninth century, a seal of Leo, imperial notarios of the genikon logothesion (Zacos and Vegler, *Byzantine Lead Seals*, no. 2127). In the latter instance, the two words are combined in a single monogram.

10.

Constantine, Patricios and Tenth Century
Genikos Logothetes

Acc. no. 66.309 (illus.)

Diam.: 24 mm.

Obverse: ornamental cross, with two transverse bars, on four steps; along the circumference, the legend: + ΚΞΡ ΩΔΟΝΛΩ : Κ(ύρι)ε β[ο]ήθει τῷ σ[π]θ δούλῳ.

Reverse: legend of five lines:

. ΚΩΝCΤ
ΑΝΤΙΝΩΠ .
ΤΡΙΚΙΩS . .
ΝΙΚΩΛΟΓ .
ΘΑΙΤΗ

[+] Κωνσταντίνω π[α]τρικίῳ (καὶ) [γε]νικῷ λογ[ο]θαίτῃ.

Laurent has published (*Corpus*, II, 1981, no. 312) a similar seal from the collection of the Fogg Art Museum. The Fogg specimen is of lozenge form,

but bears the same alignment of letters as this specimen from Aphrodisias. The two objects, however, do not share the same matrix.

11.

Kaleotes, Imperial Spatharios and Dioicetes
Acc. no. 66.162 (illus.)
Diam. 21 mm.

Obverse: patriarchal cross, on four steps. Along the circumference, between a double border of dots, the invocation: $\overline{\text{K}}\overline{\text{E}}\overline{\text{R}}\overline{\text{O}}\overline{\text{H}}\overline{\text{Θ}}\overline{\text{E}}\overline{\text{I}}\overline{\text{T}}$. . ΔϺ Λι : K(ύρι)ε βοήθει τ[ῷ] σῷ] δούλ(ω).

Reverse: legend of four lines:

+ ΚΑΛ
H O T R I C Π
Α Θ Α Ρ Ι Σ Δ Η
V K I T ι

+ Καληότ(η) Β(ασιλικῷ) σπαθαρο(ίω) (καί) δηυ-
κίτ(η).

12.

Lykastos Dikeseo(n?), Tenth Century
Protonotarios
Acc. no. 66.310 (illus.)
Diam.: 25 mm.

Obverse: bust of the Virgin, with medallion of Christ before Her. At left and right, the customary sigla: $\overline{\text{M}}\overline{\text{P}}-\overline{\text{Θ}}\overline{\text{V}}$. Along the circumference, the invocation: + $\overline{\text{Θ}}\overline{\text{K}}\overline{\text{E}}\overline{\text{R}}\overline{\text{O}}\overline{\text{H}}\overline{\text{Θ}}\overline{\text{T}}\overline{\text{Ω}}\overline{\text{C}}\overline{\text{Ω}}\overline{\Delta}$ ι : + Θ(εοτό)κε βοήθ(ει) τῷ σῷ δ(ούλ)ω).

Reverse: legend of five lines:

+ Λ V K
A C T O A
N O T A P H
T O Δ V K
H C E Ω ι

+ Λυκάστο (πρωτο)νοταρή(ω) τῷ Δυκησέω(νι?).

13.

Theophylactos, Magistros Tenth Century
No accession number; two halves (illus.)
Diam.: 23 mm.

Obverse: a peacock, with wings outspread. Along the circumference, the invocation: . . $\overline{\text{R}}\overline{\text{O}}\overline{\text{H}}\overline{\text{Θ}}\overline{\text{E}}\overline{\text{T}}\overline{\text{Ω}}$ CΩΔΟΝΛΩ :: : [K(ύρι)ε] βοήθε<ι> τῷ σῷ δούλ(ω).

Reverse: legend of four lines:

+ Θ Ε
· I · V Λ Α Κ Τ Ω
Μ Α Γ Ι C Ρ Ω
Α Μ Η Ν

+ Θε<ο>φυλάκτω μαγίς<τ>ρωι ἀμήν.

14.

Stylianos, Imperial Spatharo- Tenth Century
candidatos and Asecretis
Acc. no. 65.506 (illus.)
Diam.: 25 mm.

Obverse: half-length portrait of the Virgin, with hands held before Her.

Reverse: legend of five lines:

. Θ Κ Ε Ρ
. . V Λ Ι Α Ν .
. . . Α Θ Κ Α .
. . Δ Α Τ Ι Σ . .
. K P I .

[+] Θ(εοτο)κε βοήθει [Στ]υλιαν[ῷ] [β(ασιλικῷ) σπ]αθ(αρο)κα[v][[δι]δάτ(ω) (καί) [ἀσ][η]κρί[τ(ις)].

Among the seal finds from Aphrodisias are several specimens that are heavily weathered or badly chipped; in addition, there are a number that bear inscriptions without historical significance. It seems best simply to list these seals and describe them in summary fashion. None are reproduced.

15. Iconographic seal of the sixth century (acc. no. 62.22). On the obverse appears a column in center, with a christogram above and palm trees at left and right. The reverse is blank.

16. A seal of the eighth century (acc. no. 66.42), bearing on the obverse an invocative monogram and the phrase "your servant" in the four angles. The reverse has a legend of five lines. The name of the owner is problematic, but one can discern the title "notarios," and seemingly the seal's owner was notarios of the genikon logothesion.

17. An unused seal blank (acc. no. 65.61). Curiously the specimen bears on one side a large *beta*.

18. A seal (badly chipped) of the tenth century (acc. no. 68.410), with four fleurs-de-lis on the obverse. The reverse is impressed with an inscrip-

tion of five lines. In the first two lines one seems to discern the name "John" and the title "imperial protospatharios."

19. A seal (partially impressed) of the tenth century (acc. no. 65.454), bearing on the obverse a portrait *en buste* of the Virgin; along the circumference, an invocation. The reverse carries a legend of three lines, commencing with the name "Joseph."
20. A seal of the eleventh century (acc. no. 65.188), decorated on the obverse with an ornamental cross, on three steps; along the circumference, the invocation "Lord help your servant." The reverse has a legend of five lines: Στ(αυ)ρὸς κρατέο(ς) τῶν γεγραμμέ(νων) φύλαξ.
21. A seal of the eleventh century (acc. no. 67.439), with three lines of inscription on each side. Obverse: + Σκέποις Μιχαή[λ]. Reverse: Τὸν λάττην Ἰω[ά]ννη(ν) .
22. A seal of the eleventh century, bearing a depiction of the Virgin on the obverse; the reverse (heavily weathered) is overstruck.
23. An iconographic seal of the eleventh century, bearing on the obverse a depiction of the Virgin, holding the infant Christ on Her left arm; on the reverse appears a bishop saint, holding a book in the left hand. The figure is probably St. Nicholas.

The Gennadius Library
Athens